I if you are reading this page, chances are you are not among the diminishing number of Americans who read newspapers every day and are not required to do it for work.

Despite Oprah’s Book Club with the now-infamous “A Thousand Candles” woman who read Harry Potter novels and resulted in a new crop of Stephenie Meyer’s Twilight: “Pusyte” novels, there is considerable evidence that a number of people who used to be are no longer.

Recently, the Pew Research Center released a study that found fewer than half of Americans over 30 read a book a year, the lowest level in the history of the’s study, a Pew Research Center expert said “one of the most important things.”

The decline in reading extends to recent phenomena, such as the case of Lakers star Kobe Bryant who won his fifth NBA championship and his third NBA title in less than a month. Bryant and his teammates spent most of their time during the summer break working out, playing basketball, and reading. Since Bryant has been doing so, he has improved his scoring average, rebounding ability, and overall performance.

The decline in reading is not just happening in the United States. Recent studies have shown that the number of people who read books in the United Kingdom has also decreased significantly in recent years.

In contrast, the number of people who read newspapers every day has increased significantly in recent years. According to the Pew Research Center, the number of people who read newspapers every day has increased from 35% in 2000 to 45% in 2010.

Yesterday, the National Endowment for the Arts released a study that found a doubling of American literacy rates over the last 8 years. The study found that literacy rates among 12- to 17-year-olds increased from 87% in 2000 to 94% in 2010. This is a significant improvement and shows that efforts to improve literacy rates have been successful.

The decline in reading, however, has not been without its consequences. As the National Endowment for the Arts points out, “A nation of illiterate readers cannot be a nation of creative thinkers.”

The decline in reading also has implications for American democracy. According to the Pew Research Center, “The decline in reading is a threat to the democratic process. It is difficult to make informed decisions about candidates if you are not reading about them.”

The decline in reading is a serious problem that requires immediate attention. We must work to encourage Americans to read and to support programs that promote reading.

Meet Russell Hutchins, whose life was saved by doctors, nurses, and a protocol.

In contrast, Sen. Barack Obama and John McCain have been preparing for the fall for months now. The conventions are an important part, but not a separate aspect, of the campaign.

The McCain and Obama are both determined to make sure their running mates run as smoothly as possible. Their convention speeches are carefully scripted, down-to-the-last-word. They are not separate aspects, but they are an important part, but not a separate aspect, of the campaign.

I hope there will be some surprises in store for the summer break. We can expect to see some surprises in store for the summer break. We can expect to see some surprises in store for the summer break. We can expect to see some surprises in store for the summer break. We can expect to see some surprises in store for the summer break.

The program was a huge success involving numerous community events a week—then there were people who tuned in to watch the candidates from abroad. A common version of “Beowulf” was produced in the Ogden Amphitheater on a chilly winter evening.

In a few weeks, the Weber Reads program will announce the book selection for 2009. I won’t reveal the name of the book selected for 2009, but I will say that the title is a Mark Twain’s definition of a classic work of literature: “A book which people praise and don’t read.”

There is evidence that these efforts are having some success. There is a rumor that more copies of “Beowulf” were sold in Ogden than San Francisco in the first months of 2008. The recently released 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement indicates that Weber State first-year students read more unsanctioned books than their counterparts at other universities nation-wide. These are encouraging signs.

Increasing literacy in the Top of Utah is certainly a laudable endeavor, and thanks are due to those who are doing their small part.